

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUN 11 1976

DATE ENTERED 7/23/66
(10/15/66)SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

N/P

* * George Rogers Clark National Historical Park

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

115 Dubois Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Vincennes

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Eighth

STATE

Indiana

CODE

18

COUNTY

Knox

CODE

083

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY**☒ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☒ WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE**☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☒ MUSEUM☒ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

1709 Jackson Street

CITY, TOWN

Omaha

STATE

Nebraska

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

1709 Jackson Street

CITY, TOWN

Omaha

STATE

Nebraska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE

May 1958

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

(See continuation sheet, page 1)

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT

☒ GOOD

☒ FAIR

☒ DETERIORATED

☐ RUINS

☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED

☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located at the northwest corner of Vincennes, Indiana, the approximately 24 acres of George Rogers Clark National Historical Park consists of formally landscaped grounds planted with evergreen shrubs and various deciduous trees, including flowering apple trees in the southwest area. The northwest end of the park is bisected by Vigo Street which leads to the graceful Lincoln Memorial Bridge carrying United States Highway 50 across the Wabash River. To the north of Vigo Street are several ancillary streets to the downtown area of Vincennes and to the south of Vigo Street are access streets to the Cathedral. At the south end of the park is an asphalt parking lot for visitors adjoining a picnic area.

Designed during the 1930s, the park is a unified whole in terms of landscaping and architecture. The park is visually defined by the Wabash River and its floodwall; the Lincoln Memorial Bridge, which was designed to be an integral element of the overall design; and the Old Cathedral (St. Francis Xavier), its burying ground, and its Library. The formal landscaping of the grounds complements the perpendicular axes of the boundaries. The central feature of the scheme consists of a void formed by a large rectangular grass esplanade between the Monument and the Bridge Approach. Like most Baroque landscape schemes it was designed as a static composition which, with its statuary and architecture, would only suffer a loss if altered in any way. Thus, as an expression of Classical Revival planning, the park is a pure statement not often seen outside Washington, D.C.

Within the park are the following historic structures:

HS-1 Memorial Building. This is a circular granite building on a raised stylobate and surrounded by a granite Doric colonnade of sixteen columns. Beneath the stylobate and octagonal terrace is a raised, unfinished basement with a dirt floor, exposed concrete walls, ceiling, and support piers, and fluorescent lighting. In the north and east corners are restroom facilities, maintenance rooms, the heating plant, and the electric vault, all reached by two exterior stairs. The interiors of the restrooms and public corridors are finished in marble wainscoting, terrazzo flooring, and plaster ceilings and walls.

The Memorial itself is reached by a broad flight of thirty granite steps from the plaza to the northwest. On the east, southeast, south, southwest, west, northwest, and north sides is a three-step granite stylobate from the terrace to the base of the Memorial. The Doric colonnade is surmounted by a plain entablature with inscription and an elaborately detailed cornice. The ceiling of the colonnade gallery is composed of stone coffers. The exterior wall of the building has a polished green granite wainscot with polished red granite band carved in a running dog motif, main wall of rusticated granite blocks, and parapet wall above the colonnade with a Greek key motif band. The core of the wall is brick. At the northeast side is a monumental doorway in granite surmounted by a carved eagle. The doorway has three glass and bronze doors, two lights, a 42-light transom, and elaborate bronze grills. Inside the doors is a glass and bronze vestibule with two more doors opening inside. The interior is focused on a bronze statue of George Rogers Clark centered in the space on a pedestal of Formosa marble with thirteen flutes. Around the base is a quotation in raised brass letters.

(See continuation sheet, page 2)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6

PAGE 1

TITLE: List of Classified Structures

DATE: February 1976

TYPE: Federal

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Midwest Regional Office, National Park
Service, Omaha, Nebraska

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Flooring is of marble slabs radiating from the center. At the perimeter is a raised step and base for a smoothly molded circular bench and wainscot, all of a dark marble. In the base of the bench are bronze heating grilles in a dragon design. Above the wainscot are seven large murals depicting scenes from the winning of the Old Northwest. Between the murals are limestone pilasters and above is a limestone frieze with inscription. The ceiling is composed of limestone blocks corbelled up to a large circular skylight composed of multiple panes of etched glass, originally colored. Above the flat skylight is a set of mercury vapor lights covered by a steel and wire-glass conical exterior skylight. The space between the skylights is reached by means of a low hall from a circular hall which runs about the exterior of the building above the colonnade ceiling and behind the exterior frieze. It is reached by a series of brass rungs in the exterior southwest wall. The roof of the building is of terne-plate and the roof of the colonnade gallery is of tar and gravel. The terrace is surfaced with a flat gray synthetic material (Deck-o-Tex) having originally been covered with an exposed aggregate concrete surface which leaked seriously. The building is in good condition.

HS-2 Vigo Statue. This is a granite statue roughly measuring 4'x9'x11' high, depicting a portly fur trader seated with his arm resting on a bale of furs. The exposed aggregate concrete paving with granite risers around the statue has settled unevenly. Therefore the statue and its immediate environment are in fair condition. It was executed by John Angel in 1934.

HS-3 Gibault Statue. This is a copper statue located on the plaza in front of the Old Cathedral. It measures 3'-0"x3'-4"x11'-6" high and is set on a 6'-0"x5'-7"x9½" high base of polished dark green granite. It is in good condition. It was executed by Albin Polasek in 1934.

HS-4 Lincoln Memorial Bridge Approach and Esplanade. This is the primary aspect of the park. There are numerous walks of exposed aggregate concrete, 48 copper light standards and 12 granite benches. An 80' aluminum flagpole on a dark polished granite base is located on the northeast side of Vigo Street. Around the flagpole is a series of monumental steps, terraces, walls, and planters. Opposite the flagpole across Vigo Street is a series of monumental steps, terraces, walls, and planters focused on three large wall plaques inscribed with appropriate quotations. The material used on both sides of Vigo Street is gray granite. Also in gray granite are two 13'x8½'x40' high pylons flanking the approach to the Lincoln Memorial Bridge and carved by Raoul Jossel into bas-relief Indians. This complex of landscape elements is in deteriorated condition because of extreme rusting of iron tie rods holding the granite blocks in place and subsequent staining of the granite.

HS-5 Wabash River Floodwall. This is a 945' long poured concrete retaining wall, 15' high on the northwest side and 4' high facing the park. It is 1'-6" wide at the top. At its center, near the Vigo Statue, there is a ramp leading down to the riverbank. Its design is Classical with rusticated buttresses. Spalling and efflorescence have led to a deteriorated state.

(See continuation sheet, page 3)

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HS-6 War Memorial. This is a 5'-2"x2'-8"x7'-2" high limestone memorial on a 7'-9"x6'-0"x5" high concrete base. There are two bronze plaques on either side, in honor of Knox County soldiers who were killed in World War I. It is located northeast of Vigo Street and is in good condition.

HS-7 Headquarters Site Marker. Erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1954, this marker locates the probable site of Clark's headquarters north of Vigo Street. It consists of a bronze plaque on a gray granite wedge 3'-0"x2'-9"x2"x6" high set in a concrete base, 3'-9"x3'-10". It is in good condition.

HS-8 Fort Sackville Site Memorial. Located in the north corner of the Memorial Building area, this marker was erected in 1905, moved in 1931, and re-moved in 1971. It is a limestone, block 2'-0"x2'-2"x3'-11" high and has an incised inscription. It is in fair condition.

Non-historic structures in the park include the Visitors Center (1976), a maintenance garage (1913), and a railroad spur of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad which crosses along the northwest edge of the park and is a definite intrusion.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 9/1/1931-6/14/1936

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Hiron and Mellor; William Parsons

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

George Rogers Clark National Historical Park, situated on the approximate site of Fort Sackville, the British garrison at Vincennes during the American Revolution, commemorates the expedition under Clark in 1778-79 and its decisive consequences in securing the Northwest for the American cause during the Revolution. It was on this spot, with the surrender of Fort Sackville to Clark on February 25, 1779, that British options for the possession of the Northwest Territory were decisively ended, as the culmination of a succession of losses to Clark in present Indiana and Illinois. Important in these events were the actions of the native French settlers, who under the leadership of Father Pierre Gibault and Francis Vigo (who, along with Charles Gratiot, contributed material aid), chose to align themselves against the British. As a result of the Clark campaign, the Northwest Territory became acknowledgedly American in the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Four years later, the Northwest Ordinance was passed to organize the territory, establishing the basic legal framework for further territorial expansion in the next century.

Much of the park's significance lies in marking the site where the event most signal in this history (the fall of Fort Sackville) took place. The Fort, despite extensive archaeological investigation, has never been positively located, although it is certain the park encompasses the original site. More germane to its significance is its existence as a uniquely expressive memorial to the people and events it commemorates. The primary focus of the park is the George Rogers Clark Memorial, constructed by the state with Federal financial assistance in the early 1930s. The memorial is perhaps in the last major Classical style memorial built in this country, and one of the largest and finest examples of such a memorial outside Washington, D.C.

During the 19th century the site of Clark's victory at Vincennes was lost in the commercial and industrial development of the city. With the rise of interest in history near the turn of the century the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1905 placed a stone marker on the approximate site of Fort Sackville.

During the 1920s interest in commemoration grew with the approaching sesquicentennial of the Clark campaign. The result was a series of appropriations from the state, Knox County, the city of Vincennes, and the federal government to support a total expenditure of \$2,500,000. The finished product was dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on June 14, 1936.

The memorial as a whole is largely the conception of the noted landscape architect William E. Parsons, of the firm of Bennet, Parsons and Frost in Chicago. Serving as the design consultant to the George Rogers Clark Sesquicentennial Commission,

(See continuation sheet, page 4)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bearss, Edwin C., George Rogers Clark and the Winning of the Old Northwest, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, December 31, 1967
-----, George Rogers Clark Memorial, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, June 30, 1970
-----, Proposed George Rogers Clark National Historical Park, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, April 1966

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 24.30

UTM REFERENCES

270
A 1,6 4,5,3,5,0,0 4,2,8,1,3,0,0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C 1,6 4,5,3,7,0,0 4,2,8,1,1,0,0

260
E 1,6 4,5,3,2,0,0 4,2,8,0,9,0,0
F 1,6 4,5,3,2,0,0 4,2,8,1,0,0,0
G 1,6 4,5,3,1,5,0 4,2,8,1,1,0,0 060
B 1,6 4,5,3,6,0,0 4,2,8,1,3,0,0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D 1,6 4,5,3,3,0,0 4,2,8,0,9,0,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See continuation sheet, page 6)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

David Arbogast, Historical Architect

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service

DATE

April 7, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

1709 Jackson Street

TELEPHONE

402-221-3423

CITY OR TOWN

Omaha

STATE

Nebraska

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES _____ NO _____ NONE _____

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ☒ National ☐ State ☐ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE Deputy Assistant Secretary

DATE JUN 8 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE 3/4/77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Parsons in 1929 outlined a concept for the memorial that began by insuring the redesign of the bridge about to be constructed over the Wabash River into what became the Lincoln Memorial Bridge. Parsons here first indicated the breadth and inclusiveness of his memorial concepts by proposing a formal bridge with a grand approach that would offset the proposed Clark memorial, stand as a symbolic gateway between Indiana and Illinois, and recall the passage of the family of Abraham Lincoln over the same route. His persuasion of the highway engineers, who had envisioned a typically functional structure, is worthy of note.

Parsons was instrumental in preparing the prospectus for the architectural competition for the building that would be the central feature of his carefully designed grounds (all landscape design being performed by Parsons' firm). Parsons favored a massive but compact structure that would evoke the military strength represented in the Clark story. It would stand symbolically as a bastion, in the front (northeast) facing the carefully structured, "civilized" esplanade with the city and bridge approach beyond, and turning its back to informally landscaped grounds that blended into natural woods along the river. The memorial building thus is the pivot between representative pieces of "civilization and wilderness;" that is, a structure that represents the conquest of the frontier. The scope of this notion is indicated by Parsons' successful efforts to acquire and remove intrusive factory structures from the southwestern aspect of the memorial, and his unsuccessful proposal that the esplanade be continued as a broad park or alley along the river to the northeast, terminating at the First Territorial Capitol of Indiana and the home of Territorial Governor William Henry Harrison. The thematic and physical connections among Vincennes' major historic resources--including, besides the capitol and the Harrison home, the Old Cathedral of Vincennes (St. Francis Xavier) adjoining the park--are integral to the significance of the park.

The architectural firm of Hiron and Mellor of New York City won the architectural competition in 1930. Designed in the approach to Classical styles favored at the time, the structure relies on the implied strength and masculinity of the Doric order and its compact massiveness to symbolize the perceived strength of Clark and his cause. According to Sesquicentennial Commission records, the jury was impressed with the "frontier staunchness in the Doric pillars free from the central circular" structure which projects into an attic above the circular cornice which surmounts the pillars," and with the fact that it could be "clearly seen from many points of view" (1)--thus taking full advantage of the contrasting backdrops provided by the Cathedral, the river, a massive seawall, and the Lincoln Memorial Bridge, and representing a strongpoint between the town and the undeveloped woods near the river. The heroicism of the memorial is realized in its interior with Hermon A. MacNeil's heroic bronze statue of Clark and the seven murals by Ezra Winter depicting stages of the Clark campaign and its aftermath. All materials, primarily Vermont granite and several kinds of marble, were carefully selected for their esthetic qualities within the whole.

(1) Edwin C. Bearss, George Rogers Clark Memorial: Historic Structures Report, Historical Data (Washington, 1970), 57-58

(See continuation sheet, page 5)

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In the grounds, designed by Parsons and his firm, the memorial building divides the formal landscaping to the northeast from the informal landscaping of the parklike area to the southwest. This informal landscaping provides a transition to the Cathedral and the town from the surrounding countryside to the south. The river is formalized with a massive seawall which has as a centerpiece the statue of Francis Vigo. The Gibault Statue in front of the Cathedral similarly memorializes the French contribution to history. The landscaping was thus done to emphasize transitions from the memorial to the "views" in all directions, and it is thus crucial to the integrity of the park that the memorial be treated as a whole and remain protected from physical intrusions that disrupt its varying continuities. The effect is lessened somewhat today by a parking lot built southwest of the memorial building in the 1960s. The railroad spur along the river (predating the memorial) is also a visual intrusion. The visitor center, scheduled for completion in June 1976, is at the southwestern edge of the park, its visual effect mitigated by distance and by its blending into the visual wall formed by the town.

Frederick Hiron, the principal architect of the memorial building, was born in Great Britain and educated in the United States and abroad. An active member of the American Society of Beaux Arts, he was the architect of the Society's New York headquarters in 1928 and the author of a number of other award-winning designs. In the best Beaux Arts tradition, he was chiefly responsible for the selection of Ezra Winter as muralist and Hermon A. MacNeil as sculptor. General contractor for the building was W. R. Heath Construction Company of Greencastle Indiana. Construction began in August 1931 and all work including artwork and landscaping and the bridge approach, was finished by 1936.

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Beginning at a point (A) at the intersection of the southwest face of Lincoln Memorial Bridge and the southeast bank of the Wabash River in Vincennes, Indiana, the boundary of George Rogers Clark National Historical Park then proceeds southeast along the southwest face of the bridge about 150 feet to a point where it turns northeast about 350 feet to a point (B) where it turns southeast about 400 feet to a point where it turns southwest about 100 feet to a point where it turns southeast about 200 feet to a point (C) where it turns southwest about 400 feet to a point where it turns northwest about 350 feet to a point where it turns southwest about 350 feet to a point where it turns southeast about 300 feet to a point where it turns southwest about 400 feet along the northwest side of Lower Second Street to a point where it turns northwest about 75 feet to a point where it turns northeast about 50 feet to a point* where it turns southwest about 125 feet to a point where it turns southeast about 125 feet to a point where it turns southwest about 150 feet along the northwest side of Lower Second Street to a point (D) where it turns northwest about 50 feet to a point where it turns southwest about 50 feet to a point where it turns northwest about 40 feet to a point where it turns southwest about 125 feet to a point (E) where it turns north-northwest about 400 feet along the east side of Willow Street to a point where it turns southwest about 200 feet to a point (F) where it turns north-northwest about 250 feet to the southeast bank of the Wabash River which it then follows about 1300 feet to the point of beginning.

*NOTE: There is a northwest dimension missing.